

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on the Positive Impact of Law Enforcement and an Exchange With Reporters

July 13, 2020

The President. Great to have you here. Nice group. Some familiar faces. So thank you all very much for being at the White House. Very special house. Very special place. And I'm grateful to be joined by citizens whose lives have been saved by law enforcement heroes. And that's what they are: They're heroes. And they're being very unfairly treated over the last long period of time, but over the last few years. It's terrible what's happening.

We're also joined by two amazing officers: South Carolina Deputy Sheriff William Kimbro. Where's William? William? William? What happened to William? Okay.

Acting Director of the Domestic Policy Council Brooke L. Rollins. Mr. President, he is holding a baby that was upset—[inaudible].

The President. Oh, okay.

Acting Director Rollins. The baby was crying, so he took—[inaudible].

The President. That's a good excuse. That's good. [Laughter]

And Palm Beach County Deputy Sheriff Corey Reece. Hi, Corey. Good.

In recent weeks, our country's police officers have been really under siege. I want to thank—first of all, I do want to thank Vice President Pence for all the work he's done on this and, in particular, Attorney General Bill Barr, because the job he's done has been amazing. It's been 24 hours a day. I guess I could say 28 hours a day, right? It never ends, but it's been a great job that you've both done. We appreciate it. Mike, we appreciate it very much.

But our officers have been under vicious assault, and hundreds of police have been injured and several murdered. You've been reading about it just like I've been seeing it.

Reckless politicians have defamed our law enforcement heroes as "the enemy." They call them "the enemy." They actually go and say they're the enemy and even call them "an invading army." These radical politicians want to defund and abolish the police from our Nation. At first—when I first heard it, I said, "Well, that's just something that they're saying that doesn't"—but they actually are trying to do it. You look at what's going on in Minneapolis, you look at what's going on in many, many Democrat-run areas. But they want to defund and they want to abolish.

Far-left mayors are escalating the anticop crusade, and violent crime is spiraling in their cities. It's all far-left cities where they have no understanding of what has to be done. They don't have a clue. And I will say that we put on a very powerful rule and law that you get 10 years, you knock down a monument. If it's a Federal monument, you go to jail for 10 years. And if it's anything else, we tell them we work with the States to help them. But if it's—if you do anything where it's a Federal monument—and there are a lot of them up there—and nobody has been attacked, nothing has been attacked since we did 10 years in jail, monument or statue.

In one recent week in New York City—this is hard to believe—shootings were up 358 percent, and yet they spend all their time—they want to do Black Lives Matter signs outside of Trump Tower. They ought to spend their time doing something else, because I'll tell you what: 358-percent increase in shootings in New York.

Last month, over 300 people were shot. NYPD retirements have quadrupled, and they're going up even further. And New York City is out of control, unfortunately. My place, I love it, but it's out of control. It was doing so well. Rudy Giuliani—whether you like Rudy or not, he did a great job. He was the greatest mayor in the history of New York.

Murders in Atlanta are up 133 percent compared to the same period last year. And one of the victims was an 8-year-old girl, and we've had younger than that in Chicago last weekend. In the last 2 weeks, 105 Americans were shot in Philadelphia. In Minneapolis, the city voted to disband the police department and cut it way down, but disband it ultimately. The radical politicians are waging war on innocent Americans. That's what you're doing when you play with the police.

My administration is prosafety, propolice, and anticrime. And I will say—I just see a new number came in from Chicago—this weekend was a scourge. This weekend was—I guess 20 people killed in many, many shootings—many, many shootings—far worse than the last week.

So things are happening that nobody has ever seen happening, happen in cities that are liberally run. I call them "radical lib." And yet they'll go and march on areas and rip everything down in front of them.

If that's what you want for a country, you'd probably have to vote for Sleepy Joe Biden, because he doesn't know what's happening. But you're not going to have it with me. So we've been very strong on law enforcement. We'll be doing things that you'll be, I think, very impressed with. Numbers are going to be coming down even if we have to go in and take over cities, because we can't let that happen.

When you have 20 people killed, 22 people killed in one weekend in Chicago, and you have 88 shootings, it's not even conceivable. That's worse than Afghanistan. I hate to say it: That's worse than any war zone that we're in, by a lot. It makes them look like tame places by comparison. So we're not going to let it go on.

We're not supposed to—you're supposed to wait for them to call, but they don't call. We've asked Chicago, "Would you like us to go in and help?" And they don't want to say anything. And we've called many of the cities, "Would you like us to go and help?"

We've done a great job in Portland. Portland was totally out of control, and they went in and, I guess, we have many people right now in jail. And we very much quelled it. And if it starts again, we'll quell it again very easily. It's not hard to do if you know what you're doing.

So I just want to thank everybody for being here. I'd maybe ask Vice President Pence to say a couple of words, and then I'd like Bill Barr to say something, and we'll go around the room. Okay?

Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody.

Vice President Michael R. Pence. Well, thank you, Mr. President. It's a real privilege to be here with the law enforcement officers who are gathered here and families whose lives have been impacted so profoundly by the courageous efforts of men and women in law enforcement.

[At this point, Vice President Pence continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

And so I want to thank you all. I want to thank you for being here at this—and for this conversation, as the American people will greatly benefit by being reminded of the incredible contributions that our law enforcement community makes each and every day. And I appreciate your willingness to tell that story.

The President. Thank you, Mike.

Bill, please.

Attorney General William P. Barr. Thank you, Mr. President. First, let me say what an honor it is for me to serve under a President who is such a strong supporter of law enforcement.

I've said repeatedly that, to my mind, there is no more noble profession in our country than serving as a law enforcement officer. The police put their lives and well-being on the line every day for us, and their jobs have never been more difficult than it is today.

[Attorney General Barr continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

So our Nation needs to gain a renewed appreciation of the noble work done by our police officers in protecting our communities. And I thank the President for convening this roundtable to highlight the good work done by our men and women in blue.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much, Bill. I appreciate it. Maybe what we'll do is, we'll go around the room, and maybe you could introduce yourself and explain exactly what's going on. You have an incredible story. Please.

Charleston, SC, resident Kemira Boyd. Hi, my name is Kemira Boyd. I'm from Charleston, South Carolina. Well, on June 11, 2019, my baby started choking on breast milk, and I start—the first thing I started to do was just run out the house and jump in the car. While leaving out of my neighborhood, Officer Kimbro came. He was coming into the neighborhood, and he immediately pulled me over. And we immediately jumped out, and he just took her from my arms and proceeded helping her. And yes, thank you.

The President. Saved her. Saved her. Really——

Ms. Boyd. Saved her.

The President. Wow. You don't hear those stories. That's why I think it's important to have a meeting like this, a little different than it's the meeting that we should have about a hundred times out of almost a hundred. This is the one—because the police do such a great job. And there's an example that's fantastic. That's fantastic. And did you know the gentleman on your left? Huh?

Come on. Let's go. Let's tell that story, please.

Ms. Boyd. What do you mean? Like——

The President. Now, did you—you know? Do you want to go ahead? Please. Yes, go ahead.

Berkeley County, SC, Sheriff's Office Deputy Sheriff William Kimbro. Mr. President, Vice President, Attorney General Barr, thank you for having us here as distinguished guests. My name is William Kimbro. I'm from Charleston, South Carolina. I work for the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office. As Kemira was saying, on July 10 of 2019, while I was trolling the unincorporated district of Summerville, South Carolina, I came across Kemira and her grandmother speeding in the car. I conducted a traffic stop on that vehicle, and as soon as those vehicles stopped, the lady later identified—was it your grandmother, Kemira?

Ms. Boyd. It was my stepmom.

Deputy Sheriff Kimbro. Oh, your stepmom had jumped out of the vehicle and was frantic and said: "My baby! My baby! She can't breathe." And I kind of stepped back and I said, "What?" And you know, the rest was captured on my body cam video that's since gone viral. But as soon as I made entrance over—stepped up to Kemira, I instantly asked her for the baby, who is now my goddaughter.

The President. Oh, wow.

Deputy Kimbro. And godmom over there, Noni. Hi, Noni. Say hi, Noni. And—so, yes, we've—we've been blessed and we just—it's been a wonderful experience. Wonderful.

The President. Great job.

Deputy Kimbro. Thank you.

The President. Well, that's what I meant when I kiddingly said—that's what I meant when I kiddingly said, you know the gentleman on your left, because you really know him because—

Ms. Boyd. Oh, okay. *[Laughter]*

The President. That's what I meant. And great job you've done. Thank you very much, on behalf of all of us. And, Kemira, congratulations. That's great.

Ms. Boyd. Thank you.

The President. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Boyd. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you both.

Please, go ahead.

Roanoke, VA, resident Sara Bohon. It was about 2 weeks ago, I was lying in bed with my other three kids and—well, I forgot to introduce myself. Sorry. Sara Bohon. We have four kids, and we're from Roanoke, Virginia. I was lying in bed, and my sister happened to be home. And my husband ended up calling her and asking her to count how many kids were home. And she got up and looked inside of my boy Spencer's room, and he was not there, and his window was open.

And so we instantly saw that he was missing. And he is autistic, nonverbal, and doesn't really have sense of danger. So when he goes missing, it's like life or death. You got to find him as fast as you possibly can. So we instantly called the police, and my husband rushed home from work. And they called the search dogs out, and within 12 minutes, they found him.

[Ms. Bohon continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

But we were able to find him. And the dog's ears perked up right when he was within 15 feet. And I yelled his name, and he sat down. And I instantly ran over to him and we were able to carry him back, and he was safe. And the only thing he had on him was four ticks—*[laughter]*—so he was good.

The President. That's great. So, again, the police did a great job, and the group did a great job. And—so Spencer has no sense of danger? So you would say, basically, he's very brave. Okay? *[Laughter]* View it that way. Good.

Thank you very much for being here. We appreciate it. Thank you.

Brooke, please.

Acting Director Rollins. Mr. President, thank you. I got to meet almost everyone. My name is Brooke Rollins. I have the extraordinary honor of serving this President as his Domestic Policy Chief every day in this White House. And I will say there's a lot of brave people in the room, probably no one more so than our two officers. But this mom not only has, Mr. President, her 9-year-old here, but she has her 4-year-old, her 3-year-old, and her 10-month-old here. And her husband Spencer just took them into the other room.

[Director Rollins continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

So thank you so much for your leadership. Everyone here today, thank you for coming. What an honor it is to have you in your house here at the White House on this day. And a special thanks to the moms who were brave enough to bring the little ones in to tell their story on behalf of these amazing men and women serving in blue.

Thank you so much.

The President. Well, thank you very much, Brooke. What's more so astonishing to me is that we'll call—Bill will call, Vice President will call, I'll call—you'll call leaders of these cities—Democrat leaders—and we don't care if they're Democrat or not; they happen to be in every case. But we'll call them, and we'll say, "Do you need help?" And they'll say, "No." And I'll say, "But you just had 40 people shot and many people killed this weekend." And they'll say, "No, we're okay." And I'll say, "What's that all about?" And we're tired of those answers. We're tired of those answers. So thank you. To me, that's astonishing.

Thank you very much, Brooke.

Please.

Louisville, KY, resident Kenneth Bearden. My name is Kenneth Bearden. I'm from Louisville, Kentucky. And I'm here today because I'm a man in recovery. At the age of 11 years old, I used substances for the first time. And by the end of that summer, I had overdosed seven times already. I'm one of them people that once I put a mind- or mood-altering substance in my body, I cannot stop.

I did not stop using alcohol or drugs until the age of 24. And through that time, at the age of 11 to 24, I've overdosed over 30 times. And at least a dozen of them times I've had police officers there on site, administering Narcan, saving my life. And my son would not have his father today if it wasn't for the police officers, the men and the women who administered that Narcan. And just that, my son gets to have his dad today because of that. And I get to help others along the way because of police officers, because of the people who have helped me along the way. And I'm truly grateful to be here.

The President. And how you doing now then? So that's been—that's a lot of times that you had difficulty.

Mr. Bearden. Yes. So——

The President. How are you doing?

Mr. Bearden. So I've got 6 years sober now.

The President. Good.

Mr. Bearden. And I am one semester away—[applause]. Thank you. I'm one semester away from having my bachelor's degree in social work. I have a house. I have full custody of my son. I work for Addiction Recovery Care as a community liaison helping other alcoholics and addicts get into recovery and providing support for them. I'm living my purpose and my passion.

The President. That's a fantastic job. Thank you very much. That's an equally incredible statement. You understand what you're doing now, so that's great. Six years—almost 6 years. That's fantastic. Good luck. We'll see you in—let's say, celebrate in 10. Okay? We'll see you in 10.

Mr. Bearden. Yes, sir.

The President. So we'll see you in another 4 years, all right? That's fantastic news. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Please.

Maryland resident Rhonda Norris. Good afternoon, Mr. President. Thank you so much for having me here today.

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Norris. My name is Rhonda Norris. My story started when I was coming home from school one day. I teach. And I was broadsided in an intersection by a truck who ran a red light. I have no recollection of the accident.

My first memory was a policeman reaching through the shattered window and checking for a pulse. And I was in and out of consciousness, and he continuously urged me to stay awake and stay with him—very soothing, very calm—and was calling on his radio for an ambulance and first responders, which—his being there sped up the process dramatically. He's the one who told me, "We're going to put a sheet over you to cut you out of the vehicle." I had—I couldn't move. I was trapped in the vehicle. And also, my injuries made me incapable of movement.

He also followed the ambulance to the hospital. He gathered up all my personal belongings that he could find at the accident and brought them to my husband at the hospital, and explained to him that I had regained consciousness. Stayed with my husband until the tests were done. And they said, "She's going to be okay." The most amazing thing to me about this State trooper is that he was off duty. He didn't have to do any of that.

The President. Right.

Ms. Norris. He was—just happened to be at the scene of the accident, and he immediately responded and sped up my rescue. And I'm eternally grateful to him for doing that.

The President. Well, that's great. Thank you very much. It's an incredible story.

So how seriously—how long did it take to recover? How bad was it?

Ms. Norris. I was—I missed 5 weeks of work. I still have some injuries that will never go away, but I am very, very thankful to be here.

The President. Okay. That's a great job. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Ms. Norris. Thank you.

The President. Thank you for being here. Please.

Pastor Perry Cleek of Lighthouse Baptist Church in Jonesboro, TN. Mr. President, I'm Perry Cleek, pastor of Lighthouse Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Tennessee.

The President. Good.

Pastor Cleek. And our church watched over the last few weeks, as the way that our police officers were treated all over the country. And it was all over the news about how they are such—you know, they've been demonized and disgraced and dishonored. And we got our heads together and thought, "What can we do as a small church in a small town to honor our police and to let our voice be known?" Their voice is loud that blame all this on police officers. The voice of small town America is seldom heard.

[*Pastor Cleek continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

I think small towns all over America feel like we do: that we want our voice to be heard, that we love law enforcement, our local police officers. And if we can do something to support them and encourage them, then that's what we want to do. And we feel very good about what we did.

The President. Well, that's a great story. I thought you were going to tell me that they wanted to arrest you for giving them a couple of bucks. [Laughter] And they deserve it very much. But, you know, I've heard the other end of those stories also. You're not allowed to do anything. And you're right about it: They've been, what the police have been going through over the last number of years, in all fairness—it's been starting and—but it's never been like this, has it? It's never been like this. It's crazy. It's crazy.

And they'll find out it will go the opposite direction, unfortunately, at some point. It'll go absolutely opposite when they see—and you're going to have some defunding and abolishing, and you'll see numbers like nobody would ever believe. And they're going to say, "Let's get our police back as soon as we can." Right?

Well, that's great what you just—that's a fantastic thing.

Pastor Cleek. Yes, sir. We were thankful that it's a small town and a small police department. It was only 23 employees. [Laughter] So it wasn't that big a hit, but——

The President. That's a lot.

Pastor Cleek. ——it was a blessing to them.

The President. That's a lot. That's—good job. Thank you very much.

Pastor Cleek. And, Mr. President, I've already heard—I got a note written to the church that didn't identify the officer, but said, "I'm an 83-year-old widower, and one of the officers brought by a sum of money and gave to me to put back to pay my utility bills this winter and told me it was a gift from Lighthouse Baptist Church." That's what one officer—and it's just a week ago—but that's what one officer did with that gift that we gave them.

The President. That's great. Great stories. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Maryland resident Debby Wisner. Thank you, Mr. President——

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Wisner. ——and Mr. Vice President, for having us. My name is Debby Wisner. I'm local; I live in Maryland. And my story is not very dramatic; it's just one that my purse was stolen. My purse. People have it happen to them. My credit cards were canceled, and my cell phone—we put a special note on it that said, "If found, please call this number." Nothing came of it.

A couple nights later in the middle of the night, at midnight, the phone rings and it's—a gentleman says: "I found your phone. I have your phone. Would you offer a reward for it?" And I said, "Of course." And my husband said, "Are you nuts?" [Laughter] And he said, "I'll bring it to you." I gave him my address and hung up the phone and called our police department, because that's who we turn to when there's a situation.

The President. Right.

Ms. Wisner. My husband had another idea. He wanted to do something else, but I said: "No, we're going to let the police do this. There's no shooting tonight." [Laughter]

So he—the police came. They gave us their cell phone number. They went away around the corner, and they said, "When he pulls up, give us a ring. We'll be there." Sure enough, he pulled up. He comes out of the car. It's 2 o'clock in the morning now. And the police—two squad cars were there immediately, which is what we need in our communities.

The President. Right.

Ms. Wisner. And they checked him out. He did, in fact, find the phone. And I gave him a reward and thanked my police officers.

And I'm grateful that we have community policemen that are willing to come at 2 in the morning and do this——

The President. Yes.

Ms. Wisner. ——silly thing.

The President. That's great. Thank you very much.

Ms. Wisner. Thank you.

The President. Two in the morning? Why did he—that's a strange time. [*Laughter*] So you found him to be okay? Even though he came at 2 in the morning?

Ms. Wisner. He came at 2 in the morning, but so were our policemen.

The President. Yes, no, they were there.

Ms. Wisner. And that's the only reason——

The President. That's great.

Ms. Wisner. ——we were okay with it.

The President. Good. Thank you very much.

Ms. Wisner. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Really nice.

Please.

Georgia State Representative Vernon Jones. Mr. President, thank you so much. It's an honor to be here. I, like many others—we support you in support our law enforcement officers in providing the safe communities. Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for being here as well and your hard work. And obviously, to the Attorney General, Attorney General Barr, thank you. And to law enforcement officers that are here and their families, and to your staff, Mr. President.

Although it shouldn't matter, Mr. President, I'm kind of a unique bird, if you will. I'm a Democrat. I'm an elected official. I'm African American. I have 8 years—or 12 years of experience in the Georgia House of Representatives, 8 years as county exec.

[*Rep. Jones continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And I'll say this; I have two words: We need more funding for police officers, not less funding. And here's why I say that: When you look at law enforcement and the equipment, that's important for them, because it's protecting and saving their lives as well as saving others' lives.

But clearly, more money is needed to buy less lethal enforcement types of tools like the Bola—what they call the "BolaWrap."

The President. Right.

Rep. Jones. We also need resources for them. Officers usually, almost always, only get the psychological exams prior of being hired, as part of examination of getting hired. But afterwards, they're not given those type of psychological exams or assessments.

[*Rep. Jones continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And we lost a baby girl too, in Atlanta, 8 years old, and it wasn't to a police officer. More people have died from the protests of Black Lives Matter than prior to that. And so, sometimes, it's hypocritical. It's almost as if some Black lives matter, but all Black lives should matter, and all lives should matter.

So I thank you, Mr. President, for what you're doing, and I stand solid with you.

The President. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Beautiful.

Please.

Northern Virginia resident Susan Young. Good afternoon, President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Mr. Barr, and distinguished guests. I thank you for this opportunity to share our family's story.

Eight years ago, our 15-year-old daughter was trafficked by MS-13 gang members. She was trafficked over a year-and-a-half time period throughout the DMV area. Law enforcement played a fundamental role in the rescue and the recovery of our daughter and were also vital in the protection and safety of our family, both then and now.

[*Ms. Young continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

The law enforcement is crucial to the rescue, to victims of human trafficking, and I believe we should support them with everything we have. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much. Great story. Thank you.

Deputy Director of the Office of American Innovation Ja'Ron K. Smith. Thanks so much, Mr. President, for convening this listening session. And thank you for all of the passion and, you know, being able to share your stories here on national TV, and with the President, because it's really important.

There's so many people who don't get a chance to have their voice lifted, and having this opportunity to tell your story to a President that's not only going to listen to it, but take action, is extremely important to the work that we do. And I want you all to know that as you go back home, we're still there with you, and we're willing to come and do all we can to help create safer communities.

[*Deputy Director Smith continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

There's no reason for places across the country in America to have more deaths than a war over in Iraq or Afghanistan. You know, that's not the country that we're about. And this President won't stand for it. And so thank you so much for your—Mr. President, for your leadership.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. You're doing a great job too.

Please.

Georgia resident Jo Etta Northcutt. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm basically here in support of my daughter-in-law and my grandchildren. But I would like to say a personal thank you to Officer Reece, here, for saving my grandson. I will never forget it, and I'll always be grateful.

And I would also like to add that I'm a State employee. I work in the city of Atlanta, and I have seen a drastic change in law enforcement coverage in that area. And I see the difference when law enforcement is not visible on the streets. So we've had our challenges there. And it's peaceful now, but when there is a lack of law enforcement in—within a community, civility breaks down, and crime increases. And I don't have any answers, any solutions, but I can just speak on the fact that I have experienced it over the past 3 to 4 months. And I thank you for your invitation here and for your time.

The President. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Palm Beach County, FL, Sheriff's Office Deputy Sheriff Corey Reece. First of all, Mr. President, Vice President, Attorney General, thank you very much for inviting me here today. It's truly an honor to be here. I'm Deputy Corey Reece with Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. I have been a deputy there for—going on 3 years now.

Last month, in June, I was staying with my wife at a Hampton Inn in Tampa, off duty, of course. I work in Palm Beach County; this is Tampa. We were in the room relaxing, and I could hear a lady in the hallway screaming for help. And so I went outside to see what was going on, and the young lady to my left here was on the floor, clutching the child in her arms. She was screaming for help. The child was crying. And there was a man standing above them, grabbing at her and the child.

[Deputy Reece continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

But you know, I didn't think it would be as big of a deal as it ended up being until, you know, the next day, some people in the hallway were like: "The video has gone viral. There's like a million views." And then, I'm getting a call saying I'm invited to the White House. *[Laughter]* I mean, it just—it was completely unexpected. You know, I just doing what—you know, what I was trained to do, what I was told to do. You know, just being there at right time, right place, and that's it.

Again, thank you for having me here.

The President. It's called "natural instinct"—right?—more than anything else. Thank you very much. Great job. Appreciate it.

Tampa, FL, resident Jakebia Northcutt. Hi, I'm—my name is Jakebia Northcutt. And I want to thank you, Mr. President and Vice President and everyone else, for having me here. I want to thank you. I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't come help me. So I just want to thank you.

[Jakebia Northcutt spoke to her son David.]

David, want to say thank you? He's not too fond—*[inaudible]*. He's still dealing with it. I don't really want to speak on the case, because it's still open. But my—the main thing I wanted to address today is our police that helped.

The President. Well, you've said it all. So that's a case that's still going now? It's still going?

Jakebia Northcutt. Well, as far as with the law. At the hotel—we entered our hotel room with a key, and that—and he came in and tried to take him away.

The President. Oh, well, good luck with it. Good luck. Beautiful guy too. *[Laughter]*

Jakebia Northcutt. Thank you.

The President. Beautiful.

Okay, that's just a few stories of the thousands and thousands of stories that we could tell. And we'll probably be doing this again. But the police—they do a great job. They do a fantastic job, and they don't get the kind of—I will say this: The people of this country appreciate the police; they appreciate all they've done. You don't see that if you watch the news, for the most part. You don't see things like this, but they've done a fantastic job.

Everybody here is a witness to that, and we see it a lot. The Attorney General sees it every day. But we see it a lot, and I just want to thank the various police departments, law enforcement.

They've done an incredible job in this country. Where they're allowed to do their work, they really do a job.

So thank you all very much for being here. Good luck with your case.

Jakebia Northcutt. Thank you, President.

The President. And really terrific job, everybody. Terrific job. Thank you.

Would anybody from the media like to ask anybody a question here?

Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters], go ahead, please.

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Anthony S. Fauci/Restrictions on Foreign Travel to the U.S.

Q. Well, sir, I was going to ask you about—if you're in a good place with Dr. Fauci. There's been some criticism of him over the last couple of days. Do you still appreciate his advice?

The President. Well, I have a very good relationship with Dr. Fauci; I've had for a long time, right from the beginning. I find him to be a very nice person. I don't always agree with him. I closed the border, as you know, to China. I closed—I did the ban on China, heavily infected. And we saved tens of thousands of lives. And Dr. Fauci will admit that it was a good decision. It was very early. That was in January, long before it was thought of as the right thing to do.

I also closed the borders to Europe when Italy and a couple of other countries over there—France, certainly; Spain, they were having a lot of problems. I closed the borders very early, shortly after I did with China. So we saved a lot of lives. So we've made a lot of good decisions.

But no, I get along with him very well. I like him, personally.

Yes. Please.

Former National Security Adviser Michael T. Flynn

Q. Are you going to pardon Michael Flynn?

The President. I can't hear you.

Q. Are you going to pardon Michael Flynn?

The President. Well, he's got a case going on right now. I think he would—I don't know this for a fact, but I think he's doing really well, with respect to his case. I hope that he's going to be able to win it. And I don't have a decision to make until I find out what's going to happen. But I think he was persecuted. He didn't lie, it turned out. He didn't lie. The FBI said he didn't lie. I think he was persecuted, and nobody understands what's going on with the judge. The Justice Department, which is so capable, they decided to take a view on it, and they decided that he should be—they were going to drop the case.

So he's, right now—meaning, his lawyers and him are embroiled in, hopefully, the final stages of what should have never happened. They treated him very unfairly, as they have many people on this side.

Yes, please.

Coronavirus Testing Statistics/Coronavirus Mortality Rate

Q. President Trump, you've said many times that the number of coronavirus cases is going up because testing is increasing.

The President. That's right.

Q. Do you acknowledge that it's going up for other reasons too, for example, that it's actually spreading? And what are you going to do to stop the spread?

The President. Well, you know that we have one of the lowest mortality rates anywhere. If you know, Biden and Obama stopped their testing; they just stopped it. You probably know that. I'm sure you don't want to report it. But they stopped testing. Right in the middle, they just went, "No more testing," and on a much lesser problem than the problem that we have, obviously with respect to—this is the worst thing that's happened since probably 1917. This is a very bad, all over the world. It's 188 countries right now.

But no, we are—we test more than anybody, by far. And when you test, you create cases. So we've created cases. I can tell you some countries, they test when somebody walks into a hospital sick or walks into maybe a doctor's office, but usually a hospital. That's the testing they do, so they don't have cases, whereas we do—we have all of these cases. So you know, it's a double-edged sword.

At the same time, we have the lowest mortality or just about the lowest mortality in the world. We're doing a great job. We're doing very well with vaccines, and we're doing very, very well with therapeutics. And I think we're going to have some very good information coming out soon.

But we have the best and certainly the biggest—by far, the biggest testing program anywhere in the world. If you tested China or Russia or any of the larger countries, if you just tested India, as an example, the way we test, you'd see numbers that would be very surprising. Brazil too. You know, Brazil is going through a big problem, but they don't do testing like we do.

So we do the testing, and by doing the testing, we have tremendous numbers of cases. If we didn't do the—as an example, we've done 45 million tests. If we did half that number, you'd have half the cases, probably—around that number. If we did—if we did another half of that, you'd have half the numbers. Everyone would be saying, "Oh, we're doing so well on cases."

But when I see it reported in the night—you can check me out on this—I mean, they always talk about—they're always talking about cases, the number of cases. Well, it is a big factor that we do—we have a lot of cases, because we have a lot of testing, far more than any other country in the world. And it's also the best testing.

Yes, please.

Federal Executions

Q. Mr. President, the Federal Government is set to resume Federal executions for this first time in more than a decade, potentially as soon as a couple of hours from now. Are you monitoring the last-minute appeals on that case?

And have you given any consideration to——

The President. Well, I think what I'm going to do is be answered by our Attorney General. Do you mind, Bill?

Attorney General Barr. Yes, sir. We obviously monitor the appellate process.

Q. And, Mr. President, have you given any consideration to using your clemency powers to stop these executions and commute them to life sentences?

The President. Well, I've looked at it very strongly, and in this particular case, I'm dealing with Bill and all of the people at Justice. And it's always tough. You're talking about the death penalty. But when you talk about people that did what this particular person did, that's tough also. So we're going to see what happens.

Right now they have a stay, I believe, right? They have a stay. And we'll let the courts determine the final outcome. And that's what's going to happen. Okay?

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election/Grant of Executive Clemency for Political Consultant Roger J. Stone, Jr.

Q. A question about today's event, sir. You're asking Americans to have full faith in law enforcement. How do you respond to critics who say you undermined your own Federal law enforcement agency, the DOJ, when you commuted the sentence of Roger Stone?

The President. Well, if you look back on it, this was an investigation that should have never taken place. You have guys like Comey, you have McCabe, you have Strzok, you have his lover, Lisa Page. You have all of these people running around. You have Brennan and Clapper, who lied to Congress. You have many, many people. You have people that changed documents going into the FISA courts. And it's a terrible thing.

And this is an investigation that they said should have ended before it started; it shouldn't have started. And if it did, it should have ended immediately, because they found, as you know as well as I do, they found nothing initially, but it went on for 2 years or longer.

And—no, I did—I'm getting rave reviews for what I did for Roger Stone. And he, frankly, is going to go and now appeal his case. He had a jury forewoman who hated Roger Stone and who hated, probably, me. But she went on a false pretense. And he wasn't given a fair trial. He wasn't—it's not a fair trial. He wasn't given another trial. He should have been given another trial.

I won't say more. I won't talk about the judge. I'm not going to—why would I ever talk about a judge? But this was a judge that gave, I believe, solitary confinement to Paul Manafort. Al Capone didn't have solitary confinement.

So these are things that happened. And if you look at President Bush, President Clinton, President Obama—take a look at what they did. Frankly, it's very unfair. Roger Stone was treated very unfairly, in my opinion, and so were many others on this side.

In the meantime, you have the other ones who are—admitted lying before—they admitted. They lied before Congress. They leaked. They leaked classified information, which is something you just can't do. And what are they doing? So we'll see what happens.

But no, we're getting rave reviews for what I did. Okay?

Republican National Convention/2020 Presidential Election

Q. Are you going to be able to hold the convention in Jacksonville with all this virus spreading?

The President. Well, we're going to see. It built up a little bit, but we're going to do something that will be great.

We think we're doing very well. We had some poll numbers a little while ago that are great. You know, it's the same story: It's suppression polls that we had in 2016. Phony polls. Fake news, phony polls. Same thing.

And we're doing very well. We're doing well in Georgia; we're doing well in Texas. I read where I was one point up in Texas. I'm not one point up in Texas; we're many points up. I saved their oil industry. Two months ago, I saved the oil industry. There would have been—I created it; we became number one. We have millions of jobs. And we saved it, so Texas is not going to have to let go of millions and millions of people. Oklahoma, North Dakota—many States.

We have—we're at \$40 a barrel, and yet you can buy gasoline for under \$2. Nobody has ever seen it like that. So we have the biggest energy in the world. We're number one in oil, as you know—oil and gas—by far. We're now number one in the world. And we would have had millions of people out of work. I saved it.

And then, they say I'm leading by one point in Texas. They said it last time too. They said Texas is too close to call. This was, like, 3 months before the election. And then, I won Texas in a blowout. They called it the minute the polls closed. They said that about Utah. They said that about—Georgia, they said the same thing, that Georgia is: "Oh, we can't—it's too close. They'll never be able to determine. We'll have to wait until election night." On election night, 2 seconds after the poll closed, they called Georgia.

So, you know, it's the same thing. We have the same thing. They're phony polls. They're suppression polls.

But to think that after saving the oil and gas business, and millions and millions of jobs—I'm leading Texas by one point? I don't think so. Go ahead.

China-U.S. Trade Agreement/Coronavirus Outbreak in China

Q. Mr. President, is the China phase one deal still intact, or is it—do you see it in jeopardy?

The President. It's intact. It's intact. But I'm—I think what China has done to the world with what took place—the China plague—you can call it the China virus; you can call it whatever you want to call it. It's about 20 different names. What they did to the world should not be forgotten. But it's intact; they're buying. Whether they buy or not, that's up to them. They're buying.

School Closures Due to Coronavirus Concerns/Stock Market/National Economy

Q. Mr. President, Los Angeles just announced that they are delaying the opening of their schools. New York already said they were going to delay them. Other school districts are giving parents the choice whether to send their kids to school or not. What do you tell parents who look at this, who look at Arizona where a schoolteacher recently died teaching summer school; parents who are worried about the safety of their children in public schools?

The President. Yes. Schools should be opened. Schools should be opened. There's kids who want to go to school. You're losing a lot of lives by keeping things closed. We did the right thing. We saved millions of lives. We saved millions of lives when we did the initial closure. Had we not done what we did, we would have had two to—Mike and I were talking about it before—2 to 3 million lives lost.

But we did that. So we're at about 135,000, and we'll be at somewhat higher than that by the time it ends. And again, the vaccines are happening, and the therapeutics are happening, but I'm not even talking about that.

So we'll be at a somewhat higher. But we would've lost 2 million, 3 million lives had we not done it. Now we understand it also. We understand there are certain vulnerabilities—young children.

I was with—talking to Governor Murphy, and they have thousands of lives—I won't even say how many; just thousands of lives, hard to believe—in New Jersey. And he said there was only one life that was 18 or younger. One person died and that was a person, a young man that had some medical difficulty.

So when you think of that—with thousands of lives, and you have one person that was under 18—that's something. That tells you, for some reason, I guess, the immune system is much stronger with young people than it is for others.

So we have to watch the group that does have the difficulty, does have the problem. We all know what that is, we all know who they are, especially if they have a medical problem. If they have a medical problem—diabetes or heart or anything—it's a big problem. But we're being very careful.

But we have to open the schools. Would you agree with that? Do you agree? Yes. We have to open the schools. We have to get them open. And I think there's a lot of politics going along. I think they think they'll do better if they can keep the schools closed in the election. I don't think it's going to help them, frankly, but I think they feel that by keeping schools closed, that's a bad thing for the country and, therefore, that's a good thing for them.

But they're the ones whose city is burning. I mean, can you imagine if the country was run like Chicago and like New York and like some of these other Democrat, super radical-left cities are run? You wouldn't have a country for very long, and the economy would crash.

So we just set a brandnew record today on NASDAQ again. This is now, I think, the 18th time since—and this is since—after the problem. So we have a new stock market high for NASDAQ, and the other ones are getting very close.

When I came here, the stock market was up almost 500 points. Today, the economy is rebuilding, jobs are being produced at a record pace. We've never had a pace like this.

And I will tell you, if Biden got in, this economy would be destroyed. You know, he was in office for 48 years, and what he did was not great. Almost every decision was a wrong decision. And now he's going to come in and try and help us.

We didn't need any help. We built the greatest economy in history—greatest economy we've ever had; the greatest economy the world has ever seen. And then, the plague came in from China, and we started—we did the right thing. We had to close it down; now we're opening it up. He can't do it. He doesn't have the capability to do it.

Thank you all very much. I appreciate it. Thank you. Good luck with everything. Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:14 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secoria Turner, an 8-year-old girl who was killed in Atlanta, GA, on July 4 when the vehicle she was riding in approached a demonstration area and was shot at; 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; Emmet G. Sullivan, judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; Daniel Lewis Lee, whose execution for his conviction on a 1996 triple-murder charge was scheduled for July 13; James B. Comey, Jr., former Director, and Andrew G. McCabe, former Deputy Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); former FBI agent Peter P. Strzok II, in his former capacity as lead investigator of former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's use of a private e-mail server and the investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 Presidential election; Lisa Page, former legal counsel to former Deputy Director McCabe; former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John O. Brennan; former Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper, Jr.; former Memphis City Schools Board President Tomeka Hart, in her capacity as jury foreperson in the Federal prosecution against Mr. Stone; Amy Berman Jackson, judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; Paul J. Manafort, Jr., former campaign chairman, 2016 Donald J. Trump Presidential campaign; Gov. Philip D. Murphy of New Jersey. Ms. Boyd referred to her daughter Ryleigh. Ms. Bohon referred to her sister Chelsey Manship; and husband Joshua. Mr. Bearden referred to his son Bryce. A reporter referred to Kimberley Chavez Lopez Byrd, an elementary school teacher in the Hayden Winkelman Unified School District in Gila County, AZ, who died due to complications from the coronavirus on June 26.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Positive impact of law enforcement, roundtable discussion; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Barr, William P.; Bearden, Kenneth; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bohon, Sara; Bohon, Spencer; Boyd, Kemira; Boyd, Ryleigh; Brennan, John O.; Bush, George W.; Clapper, James R., Jr.; Cleek, Perry; Clinton, William J.; Comey, James B., Jr.; Fauci, Anthony S.; Flynn, Michael T.; Giuliani, Rudolph W. ; Hart, Tomeka; Jackson, Amy Berman; Jones, Vernon; Kimbro, William; Lee, Daniel Lewis; Manafort, Paul J., Jr.; McCabe, Andrew G.; Murphy, Philip D.; Norris, Rhonda; Northcutt, Jakebia; Northcutt, Jo Etta; Obama, Barack; Page, Lisa; Pence, Michael R.; Reece, Corey; Rollins, Brooke L.; Smith, Ja'Ron K.; Stone, Roger J., Jr.; Strzok, Peter P., II; Sullivan, Emmet G.; Turner, Secoriea; Wisner, Debby; Young, Susan.

Subjects: Brazil : Coronavirus outbreak; China : Coronavirus outbreak; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic mortality rates; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Economy, national : Improvement; Education : Schools, efforts to reopen; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Domestic production, promotion efforts; Energy : Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs; Europe : Coronavirus outbreak; Health and Human Services, Department of : National Institutes of Health; Health and medical care : Experimental drugs and therapies; Health and medical care : Research and development; Illinois : Gun violence in Chicago; Immigration and naturalization : Foreign nationals and refugees, U.S. admission policy; India : Coronavirus outbreak; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; Justice, Department of : Bureau of Investigation, Federal; Law enforcement and crime : Capital punishment; Law enforcement and crime : Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Law enforcement and crime : Monuments, memorials, and statues, vandalism and defacement; Law enforcement and crime : Nationwide civil unrest and violence; Law enforcement and crime : Pardons and commutations; Minnesota : Minneapolis :: Civil unrest and violence; New Jersey : Governor; Oregon : Civil unrest and violence in Portland; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Russia : Coronavirus outbreak; White House Office : American Innovation, Office of; White House Office : Domestic Policy Council; White House Office : Vice President.

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